

ACUPUNCTURIST (ACU) PROFESSIONAL LICENSING GUIDE

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you as a foreign-educated acupuncturist must do to become eligible for licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background and tips on the larger acupuncture profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATION OF THE ACUPUNCTURE PROFESSION

The practice of acupuncture in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) on behalf of the Michigan Board of Acupuncture. You must be licensed to practice as an acupuncturist (ACU) in Michigan.

The guide assumes that you hold the equivalent of a U.S. degree in acupuncture and that your Michigan license will be your first U.S. acupuncture license. As a foreign-educated ACU, you are required to first have your acupuncture education evaluated by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM). If your acupuncture education was taught in a language other than English, you will need to satisfactorily complete the TOEFL or TOEFLib.

You will become an Acupuncturist through Licensure by Examination. The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) administers the exam and issues the certification which is required to become licensed as an acupuncturist in Michigan.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

OVERVIEW

Internationally educated Acupuncturists need to meet several requirements to receive Licensure by Examination as an ACU in Michigan.

I. EVALUATE YOUR FOREIGN DEGREE AND GET CERTIFIED WITH NCCAOM

LARA requires that you have your foreign acupuncture degree evaluated using the NCCAOM Certification Application. The NCCAOM will also administer an exam through Pearson Vue.

The NCCAOM instructs you on the steps necessary to evaluate your foreign degree and licensure. Here are the steps:

- Apply and pay online for the Certification Application at www.nccaom.org
- Once transcripts are received and qualifications are met you will receive an authorization to test
- Register and pay exam fees to Pearson Vue
- Take Acupuncture exam

II. GET FINGERPRINTED VIA A MICHIGAN-APPROVED VENDOR FOR A CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

Directions for completing the fingerprint check are provided in the licensure application. The cost for the background check is around \$60.00. Call the approved vendor to set up an appointment. It is critical that you save the receipt as proof that you have taken this step. You may need to provide it in case there are any questions about your background check.

III. SUBMIT YOUR LICENSURE APPLICATION, REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, AND PAY APPLICATION FEE

Your application sent to the Michigan Board of Acupuncture should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from www.michigan.gov/healthlicense
- Fee: \$275 paid by a check or money order drawn on a U.S. financial institution and made payable to the State of Michigan
- Submit Exam Results and Certification Verification Form to NCCAOM to have your certification sent directly to the Michigan Board

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not passed the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) certification and exam or met other licensing requirements within these 2 years you will need to submit a new application and pay the processing fee again.

3. TESTS

To become a licensed Acupuncturist in Michigan, you must pass the Acupuncture Examinations administered by Pearson Vue through the NCCAOM.

The Acupuncture exam is broken up into 3 adaptive exams; Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Biomedicine and Acupuncture with Point Location. Each exam consists of 100 multiple choice questions and you are given up to 2.5 hours to complete each exam.

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine exam is a computer-based test that is designed for applicants who have met all of the academic and/or training requirements for NCCAOM Certification in Acupuncture.

SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES OF THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COMMISSION FOR ACUPUNCTURE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE

Pearson Vue administers the NCCAOM exam in testing centers across the U.S. You will receive your ATT from NCCAOM once you are eligible to take your exam with Pearson Vue. The ATT

includes detailed instructions for choosing a testing center and scheduling a date to take the NCCAOM exam.

On the day of the test, you must bring the ATT and two forms of acceptable identification. Acceptable ID is a currently valid, government-issued photo ID (passport, driver's license, etc.), and another piece of identification pre-printed with your name and containing your signature. You should arrive at least a half hour early; you will not be allowed to take the test if you arrive more than fifteen minutes late for your appointment. You will have up to 2.5 hours to complete each exam.

PRACTICING FOR THE NCCAOM

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for the content and the computer-based testing technology. There are a variety of test preparation resources available for low cost. NCCAOM offers a Certification Handbook and an Acupuncture Certification Study Guide at no fee at www.nccaom.org.

4. TIME AND COSTS

Evaluating your foreign degree and achieving licensure as an acupuncturist in Michigan depends on many factors. A few of these include:

- The completeness of your educational and professional records
- The efficiency of your home country's system in compiling and transmitting your university records and verification of licensing
- Your performance on the NCCAOM exam
- Your free time and how much money you have to spend

Step	Has Foreign Degree	Does Not Have Degree and Will be Educated in the U.S.
1. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 weeks processing time for your degree evaluation • If your language of instruction was not taught in English, you must provide a TOEFL • 4-6 weeks + \$400 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years to obtain an associate's degree \$15,000 • 2 years in a bachelor's program in acupuncture \$40,000 • 4 years + \$55,000
2. Certification with NCCAOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit your application to NCCAOM 8 weeks processing time • Application Fee to NCCAOM \$475 • Exam fee to Pearson Vue \$900 • 8-10 weeks + \$1375 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit your application to NCCAOM 8 weeks processing time • Application Fee to NCCAOM \$475 • Exam fee to Pearson Vue \$900 • 8-10 weeks + \$1375
3. Submit Your Licensure Application to the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application submitted to the board with \$275.00 • 4-6 weeks processing time • 4-6 weeks + \$275 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application submitted to the board with \$275.00 • 4-6 weeks processing time • 4-6 weeks + \$275
4. Fingerprints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You identify a finger printing provider and make an appointment • 1 month + \$64.50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You identify a finger printing provider and make an appointment • 1 month + \$64.50
	TOTAL About 5 ½ months and \$2114.50	TOTAL About 4 years and 4 months and \$56,714.50

5. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as an acupuncturist.

Preparing for the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) can take time. Working in healthcare in a different way and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages, such as

- employers paying for tuition and fees associated with the NCCAOM and licensing

- more energy to focus on studying
- a chance to adapt to the U.S. healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans, you may find that some employers offer benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that will support your goals.

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

6. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Acupuncturists must renew their license every 2 years. Licenses expire on September 30th every two years. LARA sends a notice reminding you to renew your license, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department. You must renew online. The cost to renew on time is \$400. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to September 30. Be careful: if you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

There are currently no continuing education requirements that must be met in order to renew a license. This could change in the future; any change in requirements will be posted on the LARA website.

LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan does not have any shared agreement to honor the acupuncture licenses of other states. It grants licensing to acupuncturists by either examination (the process described in this topic) or endorsement (where an acupuncturist licensed in another state must meet all Michigan requirements for licensing).

7. IMPORTANT LINKS

LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) issues licenses for Acupuncturists. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.
- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/healthlicense. The page that specifically concerns acupuncture:

- http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_45354---,00.html and it includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909 Telephone Number 517-335-0918; Fax 517-373-7179 Email: bplhelp@michigan.gov
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions including can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>;
- The administrative rules governing physical therapy practice in Michigan can be located at: http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=LR&Level_1=Bureau+of+Professional+Licensing

CREDENTIALING ORGANIZATIONS:

- NCCAOM Certification and Exam - <http://www.nccaom.org/forms-and-applications/>